

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Piedmont

*National
Wildlife Refuge*



Unmatched anywhere in the world, the National Wildlife Refuge System is an extensive network of lands and waters protected and managed especially for wildlife and its habitat. Over 500 Refuges stretch across the U.S. from above the Arctic Circle in Alaska to the subtropical waters of the Florida Keys and beyond to the Caribbean and South Pacific. The National Wildlife Refuge System is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



This blue goose, designed by "Ding Darling," has become a symbol of the Refuge System.

A Conservation Success Story

When Franklin D Roosevelt signed the Executive Order establishing Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge in 1939, the land's fertility and abundant wildlife populations had been ravaged. The vast forest which had reigned supreme for eons, had been cleared by European settlers in the early 1800's. Cotton became king and farming soon robbed the soil of its natural fertility. The loss of forest, with its soil stabilizing root system, led to massive erosion problems. The Civil War, the boll weevil, and the Great Depression combined to cause large scale land abandonment during the Dust Bowl Era. Few wildlife species and sparse timber remained.



photo: USFWS



photo: Julie King

Today, through the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the 35,000-acre wildlife refuge is once again a forest. It hosts loblolly pines on the ridges with hardwoods found along creek bottoms and in scattered upland coves. Clear streams and beaver ponds provide ideal wetlands for migrating waterfowl. Wildlife populations have been restored, many in greater numbers than when settlers first arrived. Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge now serves as a model of forest ecosystem management for wildlife.

*cover photo: red
cockaded woodpecker
with roach by J.L.
Hanula*

photo: USFWS



Old Trees and Woodpeckers

The red-cockaded woodpecker, a native bird of the southern U.S., is an endangered species because the old growth pine forests it requires for nesting have been logged throughout most of its range. The red-cockaded woodpecker excavates cavities into living pine trees and drills resin wells around the cavity. The

flowing resin from these wells is thought to deter predators, such as snakes, from climbing the tree and destroying the nest.

photo: John & Karen Hollingsworth ©



An unusual aspect of this bird's behavior is that it nests in family groups or clans. Male offspring from the previous year often remain to help feed the new nestlings. The refuge pine forest provides the old trees and other habitat needs of this endangered species.

photo: USFWS



Protected Home for Many Birds

The rich diversity of habitats provides a haven for nearly 200 species of birds. In the forests, birds commonly seen include woodpeckers, warblers, flycatchers, brown-headed nuthatches and



photo: Mike Chapman

chickadees. Wood ducks, great blue herons, and belted kingfishers may be found near wetlands. In open areas, look for hawks, bluebirds and the ever alert wild turkey.

Creatures of the Night

Most mammals living on Piedmont remain hidden during the day and are active at night. However, whitetail deer, fox squirrels and gray squirrels often forage during daylight hours. Feeding by the light of the moon are opossums, bats, beavers, foxes, coyotes, raccoons and bobcats.

photo: James Harrison

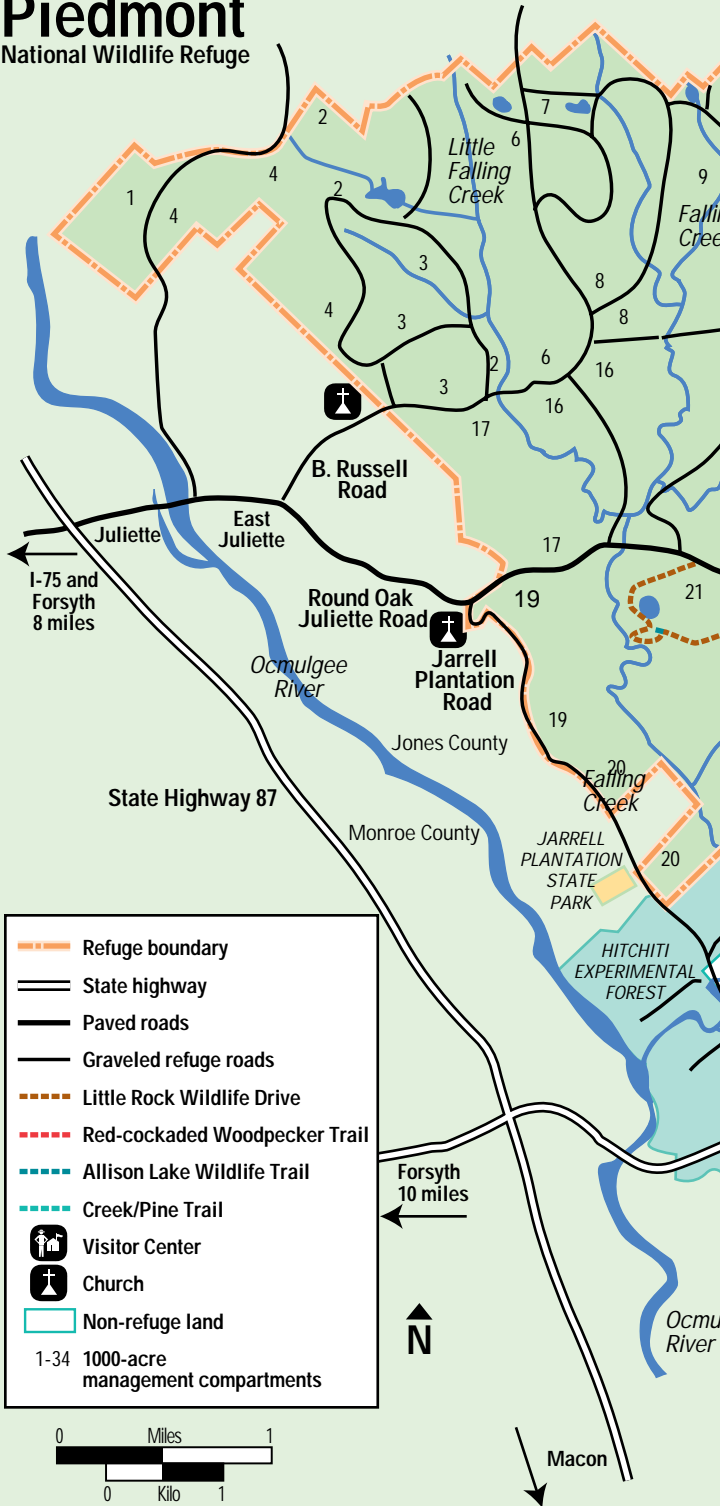


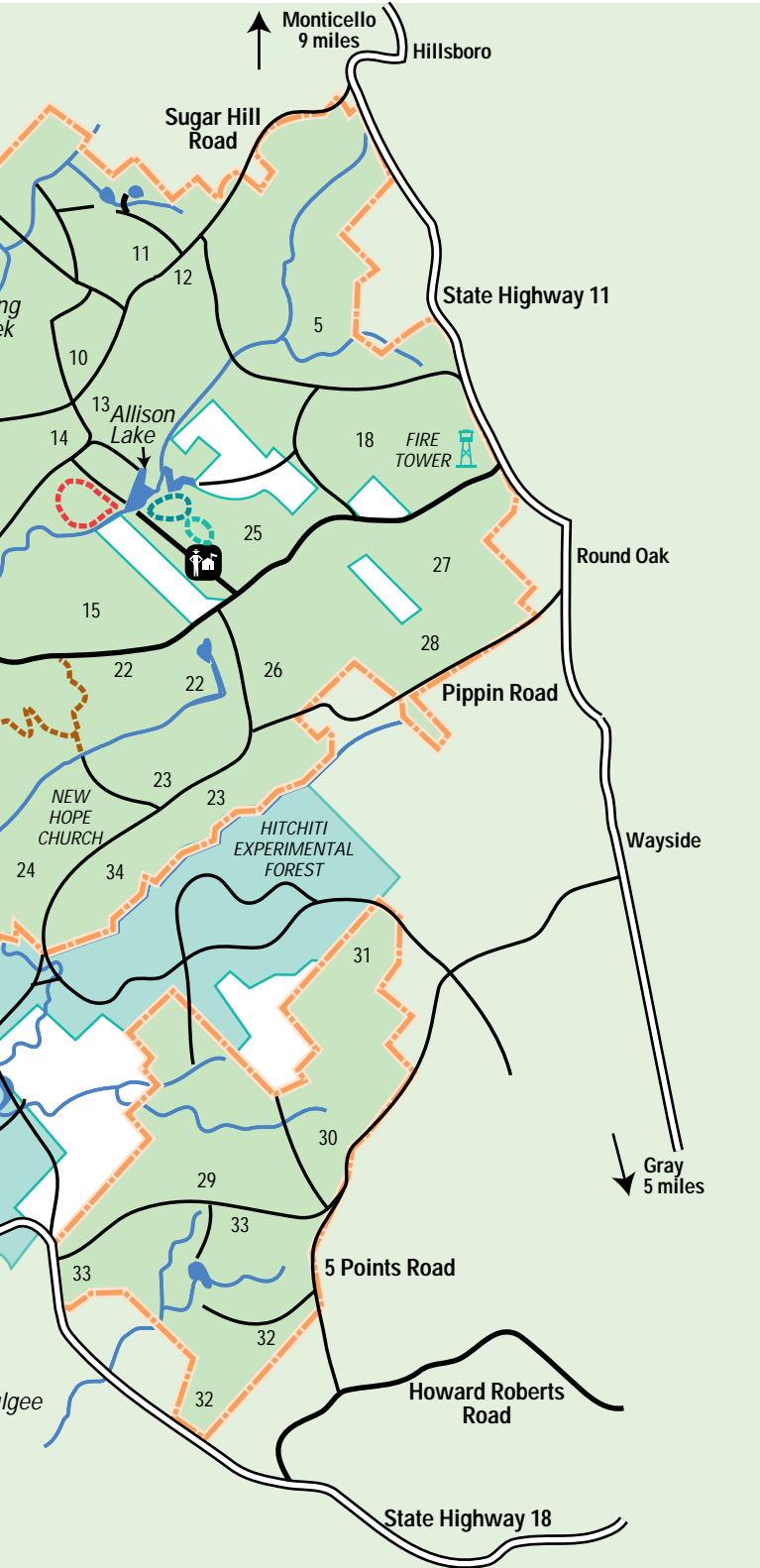
photo: R. Idenden



Piedmont

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Managing for Wildlife

The pine forests are managed in even-aged stands to provide a diversity of wildlife habitat and to ensure a continuous replacement of old growth pine for the red-cockaded woodpecker and other wildlife needing older forests. These stands are interspersed throughout the

refuge in a jigsaw puzzle fashion to provide a rich mixture of forest habitats. Prescribed burning and timber thinning are used to encourage growth of food plants in the pine forest. Hardwood stands provide excellent habitat for neotropical birds, turkeys, squirrels and other woodland wildlife.

Open fields are maintained by mowing, burning, and planting

grasses and other plants. These openings are important feeding and nesting areas for many species of birds and mammals.

Numerous clear flowing creeks and beaver ponds provide wetlands which are used by waterfowl and other wildlife. In addition, eleven ponds are managed for wildlife and fish. Wood duck boxes have been placed around these ponds to provide nesting structures for this colorful duck.



photo: K. Chapman



photo: USFWS

Visitor Center

Visitor Opportunities

The Piedmont Visitor Center contains exhibits describing refuge

photo: C. Shaw



wildlife and habitats. It is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and weekends 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. except on federal holidays.

Hiking
Hiking on Piedmont Refuge is enjoyable throughout the year. A 1.5 mile loop trail leaves the visitor center and passes through rich pine and bottomland

photo: Mike Chapman



hardwood forests to connect with Allison Lake trail. The one mile Allison Lake Trail provides viewing opportunities for wintering waterfowl along the lake. An interpretive leaflet is available. The red-cockaded woodpecker trail is 2.5 miles and passes through a colony site. The best time to view these endangered birds is during the nesting season in May and June.

Warning: ticks and chiggers are present throughout the year and are especially bad in the summer and early fall. Use a strong repellent.

Wildlife Drive

The Little Rock Wildlife Drive provides an overview of refuge history, habitats and management programs. A self-guiding brochure is available to interpret highlights along the 6-mile gravel road. Little Rock Wildlife Drive is open year-round during daylight hours except during deer gun hunts.

Wildlife Observation and Photography

Early morning and late afternoon are the best times to observe and photograph wildlife. The refuge is



open daily during daylight hours. A photography and observation blind is located along the Allison Lake Trail. A checklist for birds is available. Spring bird migration occurs during late March and April and fall migration peaks in September and October. December through January are the best months to see waterfowl.

Environmental Education

Programs and tours are available to organized school, civic, professional and conservation groups. Advanced reservations are required for all programs and can be made by phoning the refuge at (912)986-5441.

Hunting

Certain resident game species may be hunted with refuge hunt permits. Turkey and deer gun hunts are by quota drawing only. Contact the refuge for special seasons, regulations and permits.

Fishing

Fishing is allowed in certain refuge ponds from May through September. During this time, boats with trolling motors are allowed in Allison Lake and Pond 2A only. A children-only



fishing pond is located along the Little Rock Wildlife Drive. Consult refuge fishing regulations for locations of ponds open for fishing.

Pets

Pets on leash under close supervision are permitted.

Visitors with Disabilities

Access difficulty varies by area and activity. Consult the Refuge Manager for suggestions for visiting the refuge safely.

Firearms

Firearms are permitted only during refuge hunts in areas open to hunting.

Camping and Open Fires

Camping and open fires are permitted only in conjunction with refuge big game hunts in the designated campground with permit.

Litter

Take pride in your refuge by taking your litter home.



photo: Jerry Amerson

Visiting the Refuge
Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge is located in middle Georgia, approximately 25 miles north of Macon. The refuge may be visited by exiting I-75 at Exit 61 in Forsyth and driving east along the Juliette Road for 18 miles to the refuge office and visitor center. An alternate route is State Highway 11, between Gray

and Monticello. Just north of Round Oak, turn west on the paved road for 3 miles to reach the office.

Piedmont
National Wildlife Refuge
Route 1, Box 670
Round Oak, GA 31038
912/986 5441

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov/~r4eao>

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